

Lay Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 P.M.

In attendance:

Tom McGuire, Felicia Niven, Eric Reich, Mike Klein, Anita McMahon, Kevin Morris, Jamie Mulholland

I. Opening Prayer

Tom began with a prayer and thanked the board parents for working to keep things as normal as possible during the coronavirus school closure.

II. Suggestion Box
[None]

III. Old Business

a. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the previous meeting's minutes by Mike Klein, seconded by Anita McMahon. All in favor. Minutes approved.

b. Determination of LAB Election Committee

The bylaws call for election committee to be convened. ["Nominations shall be from nominations submitted by a three-member Nominating Committee appointed by the President..."]

Currently, we have five members and ideally would like seven-nine in total to represent all parishes.

As a follow up from the March meeting, Tom has not yet spoken with Kevin Mitchell but will do so this month. Eric has not yet confirmed Steve Hartsough's participation, as he may be waiting for approval from Father Pete, but will follow up with both this month.

Eric appointed Mike, Anita and Jamie as the nominating committee. They will determine a slate this month for approval at the May meeting. Jamie will also confirm desired bylaw changes with board members this month and bring those changes for voting to the May meeting.

c. Principal's and Communications Report

1. Advancement

Felicia has been working with other advancement representatives in the diocese on a gratitude campaign. Every school will be assigned a category of something to be thankful for (i.e. medical staff, grocery store workers). Once assigned a category, the school will select a family to illustrate the category, sending the picture to the diocese to be shared on social media.

Anita has been working with Mrs. Morinelli on a campaign for the 8th grade, who has given up so much of the regular “last year traditions”... the dance, the field trip, etc. The idea is to showcase the students and make them feel valued. An email will be sent to the 8th grade parents, asking for pictures and some of their fondest memories of their time at the school, which will be circulated on social media as a tribute to our graduating class.

2. Holy Week Activities

The diocese is hosting livestream events all week so that everyone can feel a part of one faith community while separated. We will continue to share details of those services.

3. Easter Project

The Diocese of Camden has also shared an Easter project for all families in the diocese, a combination of scripture readings and decorations for front doors. We have shared this with families.

4. Distance Learning

We are three weeks in to distance learning, and getting ready for a break for the Easter holiday. A parent survey was included in Tom’s letter to all families last week. As of today, 12 responses have been received. The feedback is varied – some say too much work, others say not enough, etc. Ideally, more people take the time to share their thoughts so that we can continue to improve after the break. Board members also shared their perspectives and what they’re hearing from other families personally:

- Older kids seem to be more independent. People with more and/or younger children may be finding it harder. Most kids are self-motivated, working to get things done on time so they can have free time.
- We were ahead of the curve in terms of what we did in prepping for distance learning. Other districts scrambled to prepare two weeks of work for a temporary school closure, who then had to reevaluate as the closure extended. We were online and running March 17th.
- The morning and afternoon prayers and announcements are a wonderful way to reinforce the school routine.
- Certainly, some teachers were thrust into a steep learning curve in terms of using new forms/outlets of technology. But that is a universal thing for many schools. Since then, teachers have been using Google Classroom and Zoom very effectively, conducting interactive and valuable lessons, breaking students into workgroups as needed and working very efficiently.
- Kids are missing their social connections, so the Zooms/hangouts have been very valuable. Including more of those in the day would be beneficial.
- There are some challenges in consistency between how and where assignments and meetings are posted, but teachers are always willing to work with students individually to get things done.

- We should acknowledge the hard work of teachers on social media.

Mike pointed out that this is where education has been headed for some time. The fact that the school had a contingency plan in place so quickly and effectively is a benefit to promote to potential new students. Offering combined in-person/virtual instruction beginning in the fall may be the way to go, especially in the event of a virus flare up.

Tom recounted the news of the governor's extension of the at-home order today for an additional 30 days. We continue to work with the diocese and state on distance learning and will do everything in our power to hold some type of graduation event. However, from a curriculum standpoint, we are currently fulfilling all requirements and on target to complete the school year on June 17th.

5. Facilities Update

a. April cleaning

Tom reported that a microbial building cleaning of the school was completed – basically, a mist that cleans every surface of the entire structure. When school reopens, the building will be ready.

He also relayed that we are looking at some additional plans for projects over the next year, hopefully covered under state funding. These projects include concrete at the front entrance, and a wood fence in the blacktop area where children play at recess.

IV. New Business

a. Budget

Anita queried how the closure has affected the budgeting process.

Tom relayed that there has been a fiscal impact with some families who were unable to pay tuition. Some non-teaching part time staff members' hours have been cut to offset those losses.

Additionally, as masses have stopped in the parishes, church collections and e-giving have also ceased. As a result, the ICSF (parish subsidy) fund of the diocese has not grown. As the diocese can't assess the parishes, what is left in the fund must be used to assist schools now, which will deplete the fund and it will, essentially, need to start from scratch.

If 2020-2021 enrollment drops, strategic moves will need to be made to balance the budget. However, there have been three new Kindergarten registrations.

b. Virtual school-wide program

Tom proposed the idea of doing some type of school-wide program online. Kevin suggested a "Virtual Coffee with the Principal," similar to the other live

coffee events that had been previously planned, where parents or students can join in online to ask questions, etc. Tom welcomes all ideas.

c. Changes to new student registration approach

Tom relayed a diocese plan being discussed prior to the COVID closure which will be announced shortly: next year's tuition figures will feature a Catholic and non-Catholic rate. Basically, if a family is a contributing member to a parish, they would receive the Catholic rate. This represents a discount to parish families, as well as an effort to incent people to step into the Catholic faith. Our overall per-pupil cost is just over \$11,000. He has included \$22,000 of assistance in next year's budget.

Anita suggested that, in marketing the school to parish families, specifically CCD students, we include the messaging that we were ahead of the curve in distance learning; Felicia reported that just such an idea was brought up this week among advancement staff, and that there are plans to discuss doing that – perhaps offering a free class of some type – for CCD families.

Eric added that this time has had many families feeling positive about being together and embracing their faith. Now, more than ever, may be the time to really promote Catholic education.

V. Next Steps

None, outside of what is identified above.

VI. Determination of Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. via Zoom

VII. Adjournment

Kevin made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 P.M.